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#43 - What is Heaven Really Like?

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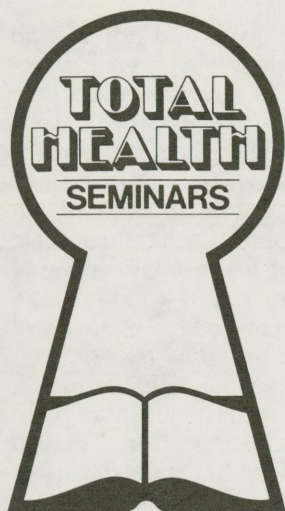


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Keys to Total Health

PRODUCED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH EDUCATION, SCHOOL OF HEALTH

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What is Heaven Really Like?

We have completely covered the Three Angel's Messages in this series of lessons. We have studied Revelation 14:6-12 verse by verse and word by word. What is more appropriate as the last lesson in the series than to look at God's promises concerning our eternal home. After all, the Three Angel's Messages of Revelation 14 are followed by these verses:

"And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, write, blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them. And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him that sat on the cloud, thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And He that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped." (Revelation 14:13-16)

Harvest time! Time to finish the preaching of the Three Angel's Messages. Time to call every soul to prepare to meet the Lord. Time to go home. But what will heaven be like?

God's Original Plan

When God created man, He placed him in a beautiful garden. In this garden were lovely trees, the tree of life, a sparkling river and an abundance of animal life. "And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads. And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof." (Genesis 2:9-10, 19) Man was to rule over all which God had made. "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." (Genesis 1:26)

In the Garden of Eden restored, many lovely trees will grow, a tree of life will grow in the midst of the city, and a

sparkling river of life will flow through the midst of it. "And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him:" (Revelation 22:1-3). Man's lost dominion will be restored in the earth made new and he will once again rule over the animal creation. "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." (Isaiah 11:6-9)

Man originally ate a vegetarian diet. So did all of the animals. Flesh food was not added until after the flood (see Genesis 7:2, 4; 9:2-4). "And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to everything that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so." (Genesis 1:29-30) In Eden restored, all creation will return to a vegetarian diet. "For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered nor come to mind." "The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord." (Isaiah 65:17,25)

The curse will be no more, "And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast harkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou

return." (Genesis 3:17-19) The earth will spring forth in a new beauty with no more weeds or thorns or thistles. These things came as a result of sin.

What Will the People be Like in Heaven?

The new earth will be inhabited by real people doing real things. "And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands." (Isaiah 65:21,22) The redeemed will also eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the garden. "In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." (Revelation 22:2,14)

The New Jerusalem

This lovely paradise will have "a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." (Hebrews 11:10) This is the city which Abraham looked for, which the prophets saw in vision, and which the children of God in every age have longed for. The Apostle John saw it in vision on the Isle of Patmos. "And I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." (Revelation 21:2) What a sight! It was a view which John could never forget.

This city, with jasper walls, gates of pearl, foundations of twelve precious stones, a street of gold, is itself of "Pure gold, like unto clear glass and measured three-hundred and seventy-five miles high. "And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal, and had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel." (Revelation 21:10-12) "And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel. And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolyte; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls: every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it was transparent glass. And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." (Revelation 21:17-22)

The caretaker of the summer camp at Big Lake in Oregon, where I used to teach survival camping, spent ten years in gathering all the stones which made up the Holy City. He put these on a pane of glass in the order listed in the Bible. Above were the jasper walls and then came the twelve foundations. In the foundations he had jaspers and sapphires and chalcedonies and emeralds and sardonyxes and

sardines and chrysolytes and beryls and topaz and chrysoprasuses and jacinths and amethysts, each in its place. Down the center, in a small strip, were the cut crystals and the rest of the wall and foundations were made of the outer material where the crystals are formed. This material is worthless. The gates were made of mother of pearl with a few pearls glued to it, as he could not find a pearl large enough to make a gate even for his small scale model. Behind the glass plate, which was a small section of one wall, was a simulated city, made out of wood overlaid with gold. A light behind the glass gave a beautiful view of the stones.

The first time I saw it was at summer camp. It was a boys camp and you know how boys can be full of questions. One boy asked how much that little city cost. Mr. Templin answered that it took ten years and ten thousand dollars to collect and put together the stones that comprised the holy city. Then another boy said, "If that thing cost ten thousand dollars, how much is the real holy city worth?" I'll never forget the answer which Templin had. He said, "Son, on our present standards, all the wealth in this world would not buy even one of those pearls which make a gate!" The Holy City is beyond anything we can comprehend or imagine!

Will We Know Each Other?

Those who inhabit this city will be real people, with real bodies, doing real things. Notice this description of our new glorified bodies by Paul. "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself." (Philippians 3:21) We will know each other in heaven. Paul said again, "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then even as also I am known." (1 Corinthians 13:12)

Isaiah gives this vivid description of the new earth, "Say to them that are of a fearful heart, be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; He will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes. And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there: and the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." (Isaiah 35:4-10)

The redeemed will sing (Revelation 14:2,3; 15:2,3) arrayed in white robes (Revelation 7:9). "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more;...For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them into living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." (Revelation 7:16,17) (For further descriptions of the people of the New Earth see 1 John 3:2,3; 1 Corinthians 15:51-55; Isaiah 11:6-8; 65:17-25; 66:22,23) "We must walk with Him here if we would walk with Him there."

What Will be Missing From Heaven?

Certain things will be missing from that city! Think how pleasant even this present life could be if only we could eliminate certain things. Here are the seven "no-mores" of the New Earth. "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea." "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." "And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him: and there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever." (Revelation 21:1,3; 22:3,5)

The seven "no-mores" are: 1. "no more sea"; 2. "no more death"; 3. no more sorrow; 4. no more crying; 5. no more pain; 6. "no more curse"; and finally 7. no more night. My children will like that one; they hate to go to bed. But just think how pleasant this life would be if these same seven items could be removed.

Also missing from the New Earth will be those whose names are not written "in the Lamb's book of life." "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death. And there shall be in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." (Revelation 21:8,27) God cannot contaminate His Holy City with those who are not fit to be inhabitants of such a holy place.

Those that enter that City "are they that do His commandments." "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." (Revelation 22:14) John doesn't say those that know His commandments, or those that hear His commandments. "When the saints go marching in; when the saints go marching in; I want to be in that number, when the saints go marching in." If this old Negro spiritual is your desire, then you must do His commandments!

What Will be the Day of Worship in Heaven?

All of those who inhabit the new earth will keep the seventh-day Sabbath. Notice what the inspired Record says, "For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord." (Isaiah 66:22,23) From month to month we will go into the Holy City to partake of the Tree of Life and to worship our Creator. And every Sabbath day we will go and worship before our God. Throughout the rest of eternity! This is just how important the Sabbath is; it is a symbol of God's creative, life-giving power; and the Sabbath is also a symbol of God's power to recreate, to make anew.

What Will Heaven Really be Like?

After all we've said about God's new world we still must confess, "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." (1

Corinthians 2:9) At the World's Fair a few years ago they had an exhibit called "Century 21." Fascinating objects were on display. Century Twenty-one was truly a dream world. But Century Twenty-one is nothing compared to what heaven will be like.

In God's new world we will have telescopic vision to look out into space and gaze upon the glory of creation, - suns and stars and systems, all in their appointed order circling the throne of Deity.

In the new earth we will possess microscopic vision to study the tiniest elements of God's great creation. And in the new world we will have increased vision. The veil that interposes between the visible and invisible will be drawn aside, and wonderful things will be revealed. We can see at present only one-sixtieth of all the light rays, which it would be possible to see, if our eyes could but discern them. This is illustrated by the electromagnetic spectrum. Think of what a world of beauty awaits us in heaven.

In heaven we will be able to hear closer harmony. The note A equals 426.7 vibrations per second. But on the piano we tune "A" to 440 vibrations and we have it close enough for the human ear. Our hearing is now limited. We can hear from sixteen vibrations per second if our ears are keen. But that is our limit. We cannot hear a dog whistle or the giraff's high pitched sound.

But more than this, in the new earth we will have increased comprehension. Our memories will be improved. And our mental powers will be greater. Are you looking for a place in God's eternal plan? Are you looking for a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness? "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless." (2 Peter 3:13,14)

I'm homesick for heaven -
seems I cannot wait,
Yearning to enter Zion's pearly gate;
There never a heartache -
Never a care,
I long for my home over there.

We can hasten this experience. God is waiting for us to finish preaching the everlasting gospel "to every creature." (Mark 16:15) Won't you join us by sharing these lessons with your friends and neighbors, so that the work can be finished and Jesus can come?

WHAT IS HEAVEN REALLY LIKE?

List several new skills or benefits you will experience by being a citizen of the “new heaven and earth”. Which is most precious to you? Why?

See Revelation 22:14. What does this passage tell us about the people who “enter in through the gates.”?

Will Sabbath observance be included in the new kingdom? Identify a text in Scripture which supports your answer.

What are you willing to give for a new and eternal life with God? What can you start doing right now?

Are there others with whom you would like to share the promise and joys of a new life in Christ? If so, what can you do?

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

Phone _____